773 224 411 Propitiatory sacrifices were offered on the wooden lamellae and the blood ran along the thong into the net. In addition, the hunter would saturate his weapon with the blood of wounded or killed animals to give his contrivance the victims' strength and to increase his own skill.

The ndõfere was used for a long time as a military weapon.

Weaving

773 286 The invention of weaving is linked to the discovery of cotton cultivation. The latter appeared long before that of millet at a time when the only known tools were those of wood used to scratch /103/ the earth at the base of the wild grasses with which men nourished themselves (1).

[171] 1. See p. 154. The Dogon admit the same priority of weaving over cultivation of cereal grains. See M. Griaule. Dieu d'eau, pp. 31ff.

The myth mentions simultaneously the appearance of cotton and the invention of spindles and shuttle; it does not mention the loom which appeared later. The tale of the manufacture of the first clothing also includes details on dyeing which seems to have been known at a very early date.

When the men returned from the bush where they had been cultivating the norolã̃ sise (commonly known as cram-cram) and the narakata, a kind of couch grass which provided them with edible seeds, they would often abandon their wooden hoes at the crossroads in honor of the Soba spirit.

One day an old man who used to pass nearby was summoned by the spirit, saying: "To all of you who leave your hoes as you pass by, I wish to give something to hide your nakedness; but I will do it if you offer me a sacrifice."

The old man reported this incident to the men of his generation, who decided to sacrifice an albino at the crossroads. The spirit then told them to take the seed which they would find at the intersection of the roads and taught them how to sow and harvest it.

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821 "Can one imagine being given such orders? All that was left for them to do was to ask for the moon and the stars."

Niany is typical of many Sudanese blacksmiths, at least
791 of those who actually practice their trade, and it is no wonder
326 that the natives keep people of that caste at a safe distance and show them consideration, fear and a degree of scorn. For the Blacks, people as well as things connected with magic are inclined to take many forms.

791 Hunters also are magicians. One need only see a hunter
224 start off to recognize that this is true. His person and his equipment are covered with amulets that constitute a covering as well as an arsenal of magic weapons.

825 The Blacks have a different idea of animals from ours;
778 they too are powers with which one has to reckon. In proof of this, there is no animal, however tiny, which cannot be, at some time or other, very dangerous and therefore worthy of respect. So animals are addressed as "master" or "lord." The animals always to be feared are never called anything else:
[552] wara-ba means lion; sa-ma, elephant; ma-li, hippopotamus; bam-ma, [148] crocodile. Etymologically, all these names indicate "master" or "lord."

These terms are not meaningless; they attest a belief that supernatural power is incorporated in animal species. The attentions paid to animals have no other purpose than that of
825 conciliating the good-will of this power or, at least, of avoiding
789 its wrath. The common practice of using animal debris (skin,
[237] horns, tail, hair, offal, etc.) to make magic charms is an application of the principle of continuity of matter, of the individual and of the virtues peculiar to them. A rabbit's foot is tied to a
[843] pregnant woman's side in order to hasten the child's arrival; a small bag of lion skin will make the child brave and strong.

231 It seems likely that the domestication of animals is a
552 happy result of magic practices. These tamed creatures are held
825 to be "weak ones" and are treated as such. However, some of their names show a trace of the esteem in which they were once held and which is still shown on occasion: fa-li meaning "donkey" derives from fa meaning "powerful," just as nya-ri meaning "cat" derives from nya and has the same meaning, along with ba meaning "goat."

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into our language and means a force,
a conscious force, that opposes
another conscious force which seeks
to harm us, and destroys it.

horns and hoofs of bulls filled with an ointment the composition of which it is very difficult to specify: blood, fat, and dried, crushed glow-worms are combined with iron powder, charcoal, and other /135/ ingredients. They are the Bambara equivalent of the "pink" pills which cure all ills, including baldness and ingrowing nails -- and that sums it up. The kana of which I speak are boli, and differ from the kana possessed by each powerful boli, which are no longer boli but parts of boli. Let us quickly admit that the word kana is as indefinite as the word foura, and means primarily "that which protects, preserves, and keeps us from harm."

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[42] These little fetishes are not given festivals, and only their owners sprinkle them with blood and sacrifice to them. They cost little, and a sorcerer or the owner of a father foura or kana will make one for a modest sum varying between 5 kémés and a ba fla (5 kémés = 200 cowrie shells; ba fla = 1, 600 cowrie shells), which is from 5 sous to 2 francs.

Apart from the sorcerers, whose boli are innumerable, there is a whole group of people, the noumons (blacksmiths), the koulés (who dig canoes and mend broken gourds), the donzo (hunters), etc., who have such strong confidence in all these horrors that they would rather die of hunger than be deprived of them. The hunters all have some to make them active and alert. Before every hunt of the least importance there is a black pullet from each, and on the return another sacrifice is made, however unlucky the hunt may have been. The keeper of each fetish is usually the only one to pay respects to it. However, his brother hunters may give it a small offering, and it is understandable that they do so, since each fetish has its specialty. One is for deer, another for guinea fowl, a third for the big antelope (dadjé in Bambara and best known to Europeans under the name of koba, a word of the Peul language) or for the wild pig /facochère/, for the panther or the

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224 lion, for the hyena or for the anteater, etc., and since each cannot
778 possess them all, one or the other is appealed to according to the
782 need of the moment.

The most interesting of this group of boli are the togo fen foula, which watch over the gun and arms of the hunter in a quite special way, protecting them from the ko nege ba, a greedy and rough hand which deprives a woman of her periods if she touches meat offered to it in sacrifice or game killed under its auspices, and from the tougourouna, which has consideration only for those who own it and makes all others /136/ powerless /the French word here is impuissant, meaning both "powerless" and "impotent"/ if they touch the meat of its sacrifices or game killed under its auspices (1).

1. Game killed under the auspices of a boli belongs to it just like the victims of a sacrifice, and if these are "taboo" for a class of people, the game similarly becomes taboo.

224 Along with the fetish some hunters also own the gnâma daha (2).
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2. Gnâma, "force," "power," "malignant fluid"; daha, earthen receptacle called a conari.

a conari in which roots and leaves gathered at night by moonlight, here and there at random are simmered and soaked. When certain kinds of game, such as an anteater, for example, have been killed, the animal is washed with these roots and this juice of doubtful color. I have been told that the juice of the gnâma daha induces the flow of urine, so that the gnâma (3) of the animal leaves, its wild animal

3. See what I said about the gnâma in Chap. I, p. 17 ff.

smell disappears, and then the meat can be eaten (4). /137/

4. All Negroes do not resort to the gnâma daha. But then they are not limited to a single means of handling

Costume of a Bambara hunter.

the problem; they have more than one string to their bow. Immediately after killing a fur-bearing animal, every hunter empties the urine by pressure or cutting.

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778 These little hunters' fetishes have no festival or formal sacrifice. Some ultimately gain great renown in the ranks of our "Nimrods," however, and then they come in large numbers bringing black pullets. The master of the idol then chooses a day for a strictly private drinking bout at which only initiates of the hunter sect are present.

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596 The most powerful of all the boli whose influence is slight are the boli of the hut or the family, the familial boli to which the heads of families, the gouatigi, sacrifice. These take practically all shapes: they are horns, balls coated with blood resembling all the tubers of creation, all kinds of tomatoes and eggplants, napkin rings, etc. -- in sum, horrors, each wrapped in a very dirty, filthy goatskin. They are to be found hung in the b'lon, or entry hut, together with the ex voto, a package of goat skulls carefully emptied and stripped of flesh. The family boli are legion, and it is impossible to know them all. The most widespread and the most highly valued are the ma bara, the sirini, the bala, the bara, the baga (1), and

1. A boli is always made of several pieces, each with a special name. All these pieces are called boli dé. Among the boli dé there is one which is called boli dén fa. One piece of the baga is a thong which forms a belt that the sacrificer puts around his thighs, all covered with blood, before proceeding with the individual sacrifices. The baga protects against bullets, arrows, and spears. Some baga are famous, and Negroes go to find the masters of these fetishes and receive from them a small facsimile of the baga belt.

the bama-n-djigi.

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4. Burials of the Circumcised, Old People, Heads of Families, Married and Unmarried Persons, Pregnant Women

Burials of the First Category, Those of Old People

[88] When I speak of old people I mean every Bambara (man or woman) who has grandchildren and so is a grandfather or grandmother. When such an old person dies, gunpowder speaks and the shooting is [224 575] even quite heavy if the deceased belongs to the association of hunters or there is an initiate of that sect (2) among his children. The chief

2. Hunters (douzo) all belong to a special sect. In order to enter it, a man must have passed his tests and killed a deer. The hunter has a special costume. See pp. 140 ff.

764 202 slave or, if there is none, a trusted man runs to notify the headman and his council, and all these dignitaries, spear in hand, come to verify the death and offer the /218/ first condolences to the family. Couriers at once go off in all directions to notify members of the family and friends. The person sent to married children is usually the one who was best man and sometimes the fouroubolomа tigi (guardian of the wedding gifts) -- at the marriage. He carries out his mission with tact and delicacy. He first notifies the husband /of a daughter/ who summons his legal wife and orders her to go and take care of her father, who is seriously ill. So she leaves her house knowing nothing, and at least keeping a remnant of hope in her heart. It is only when she is on the way that she learns the sad news.

764 [94] While everyone is running right and left, the women wash the body with an aromatic plant called sou kola (1). They dress it in

1. Basil, a labiata, ocymum album and febrifugum.